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Strategy for Integrating Serbia into the West

By

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Abstract

The liberal institutions of Western integration, such as NATO and the EU, have the best chance of socializing a multi ethnic Serbia into living in peace with its neighbors. Joining these institutions and integrating with the West will also provide Serbia with the greatest prospects for economic growth. In this paper, I will first look at why it is in the interest of the US, EU and Serbia to integrate Serbia into the West. I will then outline the recent (May 2008) Serbian¹ election results that demonstrated the Serbian people's desire to leave their nationalist past behind. This gives the West a window of opportunity to act. Next will be a look at the two most important steps Serbia must take to join the West. I will first look at the importance of joining NATO and the Serbian military's preparations for NATO integration. The paper concludes with a look at the Serbian criminal-political-security nexus that threatens to strangle Serbia's economic recovery and stall its quest to join the EU. These last two sections will also give some suggestions for actions that Serbia, the US and EU can take to bring Serbia into NATO and break the criminal-political-security nexus.

Preface

From my research, I found that it was important to keep in mind the ethnic background of the authors to get some idea of the biases that might be introduced into their writings. I have found that people in the Balkans can easily identify a person's ethnic group from their name, and this knowledge then to some extent affects how they interact with you. The closest parallel in the US would be the way race affects how people interact. In the interest of full disclosure I'd like to share my background.

I chose this subject because I am a second-generation immigrant to the US from what is now Vojvodina, Serbia. I am of Slovak decent and as such none of my relatives participated in the wars of Yugoslav disintegration. Happily for my family, ethnic minorities in Vjvodina, such as Slovaks, were not considered reliable enough to participate directly in the wars and were left behind to fill rear echelon jobs. Though I am an officer in the USAF, I have never participated in a war and the closest I have come was to drive through Vukovar in 2001. I have visited a substantial portion of the former Yugoslavia as a tourist. I must recommend the highpoints of Dubrovnik, Plitvitce Lakes National Park, and Bled.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide some background, rationale and strategy for integrating Serbia into the West. The goal is to enhance stability and economic growth in the Balkans by socializing all the states, including Serbia, to Western beliefs and norms. I define the West as those nations, led by the United States (US) and European Union (EU), that ascribe to liberal values, norms and a belief in human rights that are the basis for “social pluralism, the rule of law, democratic political participation and representation as well as private property and a market based economy.”²

The liberal institutions of Western integration, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the EU, have the best chance of socializing a multiethnic Serbia into living in peace with its neighbors. Joining these institutions and integrating with the West will also provide Serbia with the greatest prospects for economic growth. In this paper, I will first look at why it is in the interest of the US, EU and Serbia to integrate Serbia into the West. Next will be a look at the rationale for, and status of, the two most important steps Serbia must take to join the West: 1) joining NATO and EU; 2) breaking the criminal-political-security nexus that threatens to strangle Serbia’s economic recovery and stall its quest to join the EU. These last two sections will also give some suggestions for actions that Serbia, US and EU can take to achieve these goals.

Mutual Strategic Importance of Serbia, the US and Europe

Serbia is centrally located in the Balkans and its stability is critical to the stability of the entire region. Serbia is surrounded on all sides by NATO members or aspirants³ (See map in

Attachment 1) and could become a spoiler or even an engine of instability in the region. The United States has been involved in two wars with Serbia since 1995 (ethnic conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina 1995 and Kosovo 1999) and has an interest in maintaining stability so that it is not again forced to intervene in a Balkan conflict involving Serbia. Although there has been little in the US press recently, the region's multiple conflicts are far from solved.⁴ After unilaterally declaring independence from Serbia in February 2008, Kosovo remains in a limbo between a UN administered territory, EU conservancy and independence.⁵ Tensions between Albanians and the Serb minority in Kosovo remain high and peacekeeping forces under KFOR, then UNMIK and now EULEX have failed to solve underlying tensions. Kosovo will require outside monitoring for a long time to come.⁶ Bosnia-Herzegovina (Bosnia) is a defacto partition between the Bosnian Serb pseudo nation, Republika Srpska, and the uneasy Bosnian Muslim and Croat alliance. Foreign peace keepers have all but left,⁷ leaving Bosnia at a critical juncture where it too must decide whether to turn toward the West or to adopt a populist/nationalist confrontational stance which could lead to a three way partition between Croats, Serbs and Muslims or renewed civil war.⁸ Finally, Macedonia too is walking the long road from the brink of ethnic war toward stability and reconciliation.⁹ Serbia can either be a beacon of democracy and development or a driver of instability in all these states.

Serbia is a key player in another often overlooked aspect of regional security, organized crime and drug trafficking. Organized crime and corruption is rampant in the Balkans.¹⁰ A recent high profile mafia killing in the region was the October 2008 car bombing of a prominent anti-crime journalist, Ivo Pukanić, in Zagreb, Croatia. Pukanić was a key witness in a tobacco smuggling crime ring involving Croatia, Italy and Bulgaria.¹¹ This prompted the Croatian President to say, "The criminal underworld has confronted the country with an unprecedented

challenge....This is the moment when our society must stand as one because the question we are facing is: us, the rule of law, or them, the criminals, the terrorists and the mafia.”¹² The most disturbing organized crime in the region was the 2003 assassination of Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić, perpetrated by a conspiracy of an organized criminal gang and elements of the Serbian security services.¹³

Another area of US interest in Serbia is the rising conflict with Russia over influence in Europe and Russia’s near-abroad. According to General (Ret) Wesley K. Clark (commander of Operation Allied Force, in the Kosovo conflict), Russia’s president, Vladimir Putin, “sees Serbia as Russia’s last slice of the former Yugoslavia still in Moscow’s sphere of influence and as Russia’s final bulwark in Southeast Europe against the West.”¹⁴ There is even some talk among Serbian radical politicians about inviting Russia to build military bases in Serbia near the Kosovo border in a worst case scenario of forced separation of Kosovo and Serbia and return of radical nationalist parties to government.¹⁵ Russia is in negotiations to build at least two new gas pipelines to Western Europe. The northern Nord Stream Gas Pipeline would bypass Poland and the Baltic countries, bringing gas directly to Germany and Scandinavia.¹⁶ The South Stream through the Balkans and possibly Serbia will supply Italy, Slovenia and Austria and avoid transiting the Ukraine. To confirm its interest, Russia has invested or pledged to invest more than a billion US dollars in Serbian energy concerns and the Russian gas giant Gazprom has signed a deal to buy a controlling stake in Serbia’s national oil and gas monopoly.¹⁷ At a signing ceremony attended by the Serbian President and the (then) Russian President Vladimir Putin, Mr. Putin stated that, “After signing these documents, Serbia becomes one of the key transit points in the system of Russian deliveries of energy resources to southern Europe...”¹⁸ Multiple supply routes

will allow Russia to increase its influence in Europe by enabling it to selectively cut off energy supplies to troublesome states, as it did to Ukraine after the Orange Revolution in January 2006.¹⁹

Why should Serbia turn toward the West instead of Russia or attempt some form of neutrality? The first incentive is peace. If Serbia returns to its radical nationalist past, it will again incite war with its neighbors by enflaming Serbian nationalist passions in Bosnia and Kosovo and may even rekindle disputes with Croatia and Hungary. Serbia's next greatest incentive for Western integration is economic development. "Russia cannot offer Serbia the market access, the economic development or the security partnership on an equal footing that the EU [and NATO] can."²⁰ The Serbian economy shrank about 50% in the 1990s as a result of war and economic sanctions²¹ and has only begun to recover in this decade (2%-8% GDP growth per year).²² The May 2008 parliamentary elections showed that the prospect of economic growth and jobs trumps even the Kosovo issue.

An example of the economic power of EU membership and Western integration is a comparison of the textile industries in Serbia and two of its neighbors, Bulgaria and Macedonia. With the elimination of trade quotas and implementation of World Trade Organization (WTO) protocols, European textile production has moved to lower cost countries such as China and nations on the periphery of the EU.²³ The EU has also set up the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) process to reward signatory Western Balkan nations for working toward EU membership with aid and preferential trade terms.²⁴ This also benefits nations on the EU's southern border and was a driving force behind Macedonia's textile industry renaissance.

Starting from nearly the same base in 1990, by 2004 Serbia's textile industry exports were stagnant and employment fell 40%, while over the same period Bulgaria's textile industry employment fell on only slightly (6%) while its textile exports rose over six fold.²⁵ Macedonia, a

much smaller country than either Bulgaria or Serbia, saw its textile employment fall the same percentage as Serbia but its exports soared 650%.²⁶ The prime difference is that Macedonia and Bulgaria turned toward the West, by signing an SAA and joining the EU respectively, while Serbia became a pariah.²⁷ According to a European Stability Initiative report, "If Serbia would have followed Bulgaria in the period since 1997 it would have today [Jan 2006] 100,000 additional jobs in the textile and clothing sector alone."²⁸

Serbia does not expect to join the WTO until mid 2009 and did not sign an SAA until 29 April 2008; and even that has been suspended by the EU pending arrest and extradition of Ratko Mladic to the war crimes tribunal at The Hague. Dutch opposition is the main obstacle to unfreezing the SAA. Dutch Foreign Ministry spokesperson Marjolein de Rooij told the Serbian official news agency "The implementation of the SAA requires full cooperation with the Tribunal [International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia or ICTY], the best proof of which would be arrest of Ratko Mladic."²⁹

Western integration and even EU membership is a highly charged issue in Serbia due to the fight over the future of Kosovo and cooperation with the ICTY. The nationalist parties in Serbia have found their *raison d'être* in stirring up outrage over Kosovo independence. When Serbian President Boris Tadić signed the SAA in April 2008, Vojislav Koštunica, the caretaker prime minister of Serbia and head of the Democratic Party of Serbia, said Tadić was in effect accepting the independence of Kosovo, a "shameful and illegal" act. He said the next government would cancel the pact. Koštunica continued that, "We will never allow anybody to sign [away] the independence of Kosovo on behalf of Serbia, and that is why today's Tadić signature is worth absolutely nothing."³⁰

Prior to the May 2008 parliamentary elections, many pollsters and pundits agreed with James Lyon, the senior advisor to the watchdog International Crisis Group, when he said, “[Serbian] public anger over Western support for Kosovo's independence is such that any attempt by the EU or U.S. to support pro-Western parties prior to the elections risks strengthening the nationalist vote.”³¹ Surprisingly, just the opposite took place. President Tadić’s Coalition for a European Serbia took 102 of the 250 seats (38% of the popular vote) in parliament and formed a government a month later with the Socialist Party of Serbia, ousting Koštunica as Prime Minister. This was a result of three factors; the signing of the SAA; the elimination of visa fees for Serbs traveling to 17 European countries, both within two weeks of the election; and a major deal between Fiat, the Italian carmaker, and Zastava, a Serbian “cars-to-Kalashnikovs” conglomerate. This promises an investment of €700m (\$1.1 billion) and the creation of thousands of jobs in Serbia.³² The prospect of jobs and economic growth is a powerful draw in a country with an 18.8% unemployment rate.³³ Since the election, the single biggest threat to parliamentary forces driving for Western integration has been the ultra-nationalist Serbian Radical Party, who secured 78 seats (29% of vote). That party has since imploded after an internal fight over western integration. This leaves President Tadić’s Coalition for European Serbia firmly in control of Serbia for the near future.³⁴

Strategy for Integrating Serbia Into the West Through EU and NATO Membership

Serbia’s path to peace and prosperity leads through integrating with the West by joining the NATO and in turn the EU. Social integration through the premier European Western liberal institutions of the EU and especially NATO have done a brilliant job of bringing peace to Western Europe and can do the same for Serbia.

NATO membership is essential to enhancing stability in the Balkans. Croatia and Albania joined NATO April 2009 and the rest of the countries in the region are either already members or have expressed interest in joining. Originally set up as an alliance against the Soviet empire to the east, NATO has transformed into a new organization with new missions, one of which is expressed in the 1991 NATO Strategic Concept:

To provide one of the indispensable foundations for a stable security environment in Europe, based on the growth of democratic institutions and commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes, in which no country would be able to intimidate or coerce any European nation or to impose hegemony through the threat or use of force.³⁵

A 1995 NATO study found that NATO enlargement would build security and stability “by encouraging and supporting democratic reform,... fostering patterns and habits of cooperation, consultation and consensus-building,... and promoting good-neighborly relations.”³⁶ This vision was proven out with the successful accession and membership of the former communist central European nations.³⁷ No one can dispute the success of the EU and NATO in bringing an unprecedented period of peace to the once warring states of Europe. In the EU and NATO, the West European states, “defined their collective identity not merely by geographical location...but mainly by liberal values and norms.”³⁸ These liberal values, norms and a belief in human rights are the basis for “Social pluralism, the rule of law, democratic political participation and representation as well as private property and a market based economy.”³⁹ NATO was founded on the desire to protect and develop these values, not just to promote national defense or a balance of power.⁴⁰ The NATO preamble states that members “are determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. They seek to promote stability and well-being in the North

Atlantic area”⁴¹ NATO was also “designed to socialize West Germany to the liberal norms of the Western community and forge a common identity between Germany and the West.”⁴²

The EU was also built for a dual purpose, not only for economic integration but also to spread liberal values for peaceful coexistence within Western Europe. The 1951 preamble of the Treaty of Paris setting up the European Coal and Steel Community (the ECSC grew into today’s EU) clearly states this commitment. The founders:

RESOLVED to substitute for age old rivalries the merging of their essential interests; to create, by establishing an economic community, the basis for a broader and deeper community among peoples long divided by bloody conflicts; and to lay the foundations for institutions which will give direction to a destiny henceforward shared.⁴³

The principles espoused in the NATO treaty and the institution have performed “astonishingly well at containing European interstate disagreements within its institution and preventing violent conflict among member states as well as between member and nonmember states.”⁴⁴ Further, the EU has contributed to this peace and brought an unprecedented prosperity to Western Europe. Even today as the global financial crisis sorely tests the liberal values of the West,⁴⁵ the EU is showing the strength of its institutions and cohesion by preventing the worst of protectionist, xenophobic nationalist policies that led to world war in the 1930s:

But among EU leaders there is a consensus on the need to defend “fundamental rights”. The EU can be expected to block blatantly discriminatory laws on housing, employment or schools. No hotheaded nationalist can close borders to a neighbour’s goods.⁴⁶

The EU has the power to enforce liberal values through its courts and through soft power such as peer pressure. Western institutions have shown their strength and value time and again. Thus, it makes sense to expand the reach of these institutions to bring peace and prosperity to the Balkans and Serbia in particular.

Serbian defense minister Dragan Šutanovac, has committed the Serbian military to modernizing and working toward achieving NATO standards. He said “My job is to standardize our army at the level of the best armies in the world, and that is the NATO standard. On that question there is agreement between officers. The decision whether or not to join NATO will not be taken within this ministry.”⁴⁷ The various parties in the Serbian parliament have radically different positions of NATO membership,⁴⁸ but most agree with Serbian President Tadić when he said, “Only the people of Serbia could decide in a referendum whether Serbia should join NATO.”⁴⁹ The Serbian armed forces are well on their way to modernization using the NATO model of building a lean, interoperable, professional military with a democratic civilian led officer and noncommissioned officer corps. The Serbian military has a fairly strong apolitical tradition. Though it too became politicized under Milosevic, the tradition of separation from politics made it easier to reform the military and put it under democratic civilian control than the other security services. According to the 2008 EU Commission report:

Statutory provisions on democratic oversight of the army and the security services are comprehensive and assign a primary role to parliament...A national security strategy, a defense strategy, a military doctrine, new legislation on conscientious objectors and implementing laws on security agencies still need to be adopted...Reform in this sector still has to be completed and the new parliament needs to ensure effective democratic oversight⁵⁰

The populace is divided over NATO accession due to the 1999 war with NATO over Kosovo and the Feb 2008 unilateral Kosovo independence declaration.⁵¹ In the 1999 campaign, 36,000 cluster bombs were dropped and 15 tons of ammunition with radioactive components (depleted uranium anti armor rounds) were expended on 112 locations throughout Serbia and Kosovo, killing 3,500 people and causing 30 to 100 billion dollars in damage.⁵² These numbers came from a study by the Serbian government, but even if the source has some bias it still

indicates the perceptions that will be put forth by groups opposing NATO. Nonetheless, the ruling coalition, led by President Tadić, maintains that entering NATO is among “Serbia’s most significant guarantees for EU acceptance.”⁵³

A recent case where NATO overcame negative perceptions and became a positive force was in Macedonia. When NATO was invited to aid Macedonia in seeking a resolution to its increasingly violent ethnic strife in 2001, it also faced significant mistrust and opposition within Macedonia. “In the beginning, the Alliance underestimated the level of hostility that it faced in local media. To put this right, improve its image and counter the conspiracy theories that were gaining ground, it dispatched a team of media experts to Macedonia to work with the local authorities and explain the nature of its work.”⁵⁴ NATO must take an active approach in Serbia to publicizing the positive aspects of NATO membership. This should be geared toward promoting a public debate to inform citizens of the good work NATO has done and the pride of contribution and benefits Serbia can gain from membership. Public support is the key, since a national referendum on membership is assured. Also, even in states such as Slovenia, where there was strong support among elites for NATO membership, the support of the public cannot be taken for granted. Slovenia’s bid for NATO membership was almost derailed by a public backlash to being kept in the dark and having their support taken for granted.⁵⁵ Kosovo independence is still a political third rail in Serbia, but the parties in power are committed to a political versus a military resolution, mirroring Serbian President Tadic’s statement that “we want to achieve a solution through negotiations, without any war and violence.”⁵⁶ It is likely that as time goes on and Serbia sees increasing development and prosperity from Western integration and continued security for the Serb minority living in Kosovo, that the Kosovo issue will recede.

The success and consolidation of power by Western leaning parties in Serbia,⁵⁷ gives the West an opportunity to finally and firmly bring Serbia into the fraternity of peaceful liberal democratic, prosperous nations. Recent EU accessions like Slovenia and Slovakia and neighbors such as Bulgaria and Romania are serving as role models and lending assistance/expertise without the taint of involvement in recent wars.⁵⁸ For example, Serbia is Slovakia's number one priority for foreign aid.⁵⁹ The most recent election showed that direct engagement, notably with the EU, has a positive effect and that there is no reason to minimize direct partnering with other member nations of the EU and NATO. In fact, with the global economic slowdown, the West will have to pool resources to show the Serbian people that Western economic and social integration is the path to peace and prosperity. All the Western allies should support democratic reform leaders in Serbia. They need to strengthen the Partnership for Peace initiative and develop a membership action plan for NATO and EU accession.

The first step is to activate the SAA and closely monitor Serbia's progress toward EU and NATO membership. The Dutch are the main obstacle to progress by insisting on the capture of Karadic before they will support ratification of Serbia's SAA. Since Serbian officials captured and extradited another war criminal, Radovan Karadzic, within months of forming a West leaning government in the Summer of 2008, it is unlikely that they have access to Mladic, or they would have handed him over by now. The Dutch must put past humiliations behind them and let the EU and NATO begin the work of integrating Serbia into the West as it did with Germany. It is doubtful that Germany would have been such a success for Western integration if the West had waited until Holocaust architects Adolf Eichmann, was captured in 1960 to begin the process of socialization.⁶⁰

Strategy for Breaking Serbia's Political-Criminal Security Nexus

Serbia has developed a political-criminal-security nexus that is the biggest obstacle to growth and stability, after ethnic nationalism. This nexus saps growth and undermines confidence in the government and its ability to bring stability. This in turn deters physical and human capital investment, retarding growth. This triad must be broken up if Serbia is to realize its potential. Corruption and organized crime is a Balkan regional problem. In 2002, the EU set up a commission to report regularly on the progress of Western Balkan nations toward possible EU membership. The commission's "Serbia 2008 Progress Report"⁶¹ called organized crime and corruption areas of "serious concern,"⁶² tough words for a EU body, and the worst rating of the over 30 areas reviewed. Serbia is at the heart of the southern route for smuggling into the EU. Albanian groups work closely with other groups in Macedonia, Serbia and Bulgaria to move shipments into the EU for distribution.⁶³ Human trafficking is also trending upward with an increasing percentage of victims being underage and of Serbian origin. Of the 41 victims identified in 2007 by law enforcement officials in South Eastern Europe, 34 were Serbian citizens.⁶⁴ Corruption and organized crime kept the Serbian economy from completely collapsing during the war years of the 1990s, but its continued influence has severely inhibited growth and investment in the last decade. Factors that contribute to growth such as political, economic and social stability, fair taxation, competition, trade and a law abiding society are all areas that are negatively affected by wide spread corruption and organized crime.⁶⁵

Under communism, there was very little corruption and organized crime in Yugoslavia. "There was the so-called economic crime, which, despite certain similarities, was different from organized crime, particularly in that it could not be internationalized, and it did not aim at acquiring social or state power."⁶⁶ The closed economy, tight monetary control and semi-police

state prevented the growth of organized crime and corruption. It was not until the end of communism and the freeing of the economy and politics that corruption and organized crime exploded in the new free republics of the former Yugoslavia. In the 1990s corruption, organized crime and the internal security services grew so powerful and intertwined that they formed a “Security-Political-Criminal Nexus,”⁶⁷ in which organized crime had infiltrated government and society to such an extent that they became indistinguishable.

During the reign of Slobodan Milosevic, his government intentionally merged its law-enforcing institutions, and especially the security service, with organized crime to set up an extensive system of parallel grey and black economies to circumvent the UN-imposed sanctions. [This served] first, to profit those involved; second, to serve as a safety valve, and thus prevent a popular uprising of the impoverished population.⁶⁸

One of the most prominent of these collaborations was between the Zemun gang and the Security Information Agency (Bezbednosnoinformativna agencija, BIA).⁶⁹ The BIA provided Zemun gang members training and protection in exchange for supposedly “valuable data on Albanian terrorists in Kosovo.”⁷⁰

The culmination of this political-criminal nexus was the 2003 assassination of Serbian Prime minister Zoran Đinđić. The assassination trial revealed that the mafia and security services were involved in the overthrow of Milosevic. Đinđić and Vojislav Koštunica came to power during a popular uprising over a disputed presidential vote split between Milosevic and Koštunica in 2000. The key to overthrowing Milosevic was to prevent the army and security services from propping up Milosevic by suppressing the popular uprisings. To this end, Koštunica aligned himself with the army and KOS, while Đinđić built a relationship with the BIA and the Serbian police, allowing Đinđić to eventually be elected prime minister and Koštunica to become president.⁷¹ Once in power, Đinđić made a commitment to breaking up the nexus of organized crime and the internal security services and bring both under control. It was just a matter of time

before the government or the criminals struck. In a bitter irony, the Zemun gang with the help of militarized elements of the BIA (the Red Berets), struck first,⁷² assassinating the prime minister on 12 March 2003.

Breaking the political/criminal nexus in Serbia is a three front fight. First, the security services must be socialized to democratic control while not becoming politicized, or packed with the controlling party's cronies in an attempt to use the security services to intimidate their opposition. Then organized crime must be brought under reasonable control. Finally, political leaders must divorce themselves from both using and being used by the security services and organized crime.

First in the nexus is the security sector. The security sector in Serbia can be divided into three parts: the military, security services, and police. All three were severely corrupted and criminalized under Milosevic. Of the three, the internal security services were the most corrupt and still are a powerful corrupting force in Serbian politics due to their continued connections to criminal gangs. The Serbian security services consist of two main bodies, the KOS and the BIA. The KOS was the intelligence branch of the military. It was renamed and reorganized twice (becoming the VBA Vojno-bezbednosna agencija) and put under the direct control of the Minister of Defense.⁷³ The KOS has responded well to reform because it was originally part of the Yugoslav National Army and was thus a more neutral national entity compared to the BIA, which was a Serbia specific security agency under the former Yugoslavia.

Reform of the BIA has been more problematic, because it is far more intertwined with organized crime and Serbian power politics. After several false starts, the parliament finally set up a Defense Security Committee to oversee the BIA and added some judicial regulation, while clearly separating BIA state security operations from public police functions. Still, the Defense

Security Committee's work has been hampered by a lack of specialist expertise and administrative support, making it hard for the committee to provide proper oversight. The BIA, for its part, publicly welcomed parliamentary oversight and has emphasized its antiterrorism and anti organized crime work.⁷⁴

Though a vast improvement over the 1990s, the legal framework for democratic oversight and the democratic socialization of the BIA is far from complete. There has been substantial reorganization and dismissal of the old guard. It remains to be seen if the BIA has been fundamentally reformed or if one group of cronies has been replaced with another. Politicians continue to be reluctant to tackle security sector reform, due to lack of consensus and for fear of a backlash from the security services.⁷⁵ A big challenge, and probably the greatest evidence of the reform of the state security services and renunciation of their criminal past, would be the arrest and extradition of Ratko Mladić. The security services have tacitly admitted that they harbored Mladić, at least until March 2002. The army even went so far as to provide a bodyguard and shelter in military facilities as late as June 2002.⁷⁶

The triumph of President Tadić's Coalition for European Serbia and the collapse of the main opposition party, bring a window of opportunity to achieve real reform and democratic socialization of the security services, but also raise the possibility that the ruling coalition will merely install their own cronies to maintain the status quo. Recent reforms moving control of the security services from the executive branch to the legislative branch of government make a negative outcome unlikely. Nonetheless, the EU and NATO must work together to take advantage of this opportunity to firmly entrench democratic values and accountability in Serbia's government. They must provide training and aid to develop institutions and use the PfP and SAA

processes to aid and reward reform. The May 2008 elections proved that the Serbian people will back reformers if they can see tangible results.

On the organized crime front, the government of Serbia has made some attempt at control. The assassination of Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić and the following investigations indicate that they have a long way to go. The Đinđić murder case was finally closed when the Serbian Supreme Court confirmed the conviction of the two top officers of the Red Berets and 10 Zemun gang members on 30 December 2008, but only after a four-year trial where two key witnesses were murdered.⁷⁷

Organized crime is a global problem, but it is particularly acute in the Balkan region and is exacerbated by the relatively porous borders among states there. Thus, governments must coordinate their efforts to prevent criminal operations from simply shifting to a neighboring state. The states are moving toward more cooperation. Among other agreements, on 12 December 2008 the Croatian and Serbian interior ministers signed a cooperation agreement. At the signing, Croatia's Interior Minister, Tomislav Karamarko, said, "[We are] aware of the turbulent organized crime situation in the region, we are encouraging cooperation, exchange of information and joining the fight against criminals who know no borders and live in Serbia or Croatia and operate in Serbia, Croatia, or Bosnia-Herzegovina."⁷⁸

To attack organized crime in the Balkans, the governments in the region need to take a cyclical strategic approach of "(a) detailed assessments of the problem, (b) the prioritization of objectives, the sustained mobilization, calibration of resources, and means to achieve priority objectives and (c) evaluation of performance."⁷⁹ This cyclical approach is essential in building adaptive learning organizations that can adapt enforcement techniques to the ever-changing methods of an elusive enemy.

There are many models that have been effective in controlling organized crime in the past, but a highly successful case is Hong Kong. Some factors that went into Hong Kong's successful assault on organized crime⁸⁰ included: powerful anticorruption ordinances; mass media scrutiny; high pay for senior officials to maintain integrity coupled with integrity checks and immediate dismissal of tainted officials; and an absolutely "Independent Commission Against Corruption." The corruption commission attacked the problem with departments for investigations, corruption prevention, and community relations.⁸¹ An independent commission is required in cases like Serbia, where organized crime, politics, and security services have become so intertwined as to form a mutually supporting nexus. The two most important factors for Serbia will be political will and developing a civil society with a culture of lawfulness that does not accept corruption.⁸² Political will can be driven by civil society if there is a reliable electoral system and a free press. Serbia has both, and both have been well exercised in the multiple recent elections.⁸³

Outside agents such as the EU, US, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) can take action on these two fronts with an educational media campaign attacking corruption and organized crime. The EU, in particular, should make control of organized crime a high priority in Serbia's EU accession process. The EU, thru the SAA and enlargement process, could serve as a neutral assessor and driver for improvement. The British government played this role effectively during Hong Kong's successful fight against corruption and organized crime. Curbing crime and corruption is far more in the EU's self interest than its current fixation on catching war criminals.⁸⁴

Conclusion

Serbia is a key actor in the future of Balkan stability and economic development. All of its neighbors are NATO and EU members or aspirants and the future of the Balkan peoples will only be enhanced by socializing Serbia to Western norms, the most successful institutional manifestations of which are NATO and the EU. The Serbian electorate showed its commitment to Western integration by electing pro Western representatives in the May 2008 national elections. The biggest threat to Serbia's move forward, other than the Kosovo question, is the nexus of political, criminal and security service forces that are still sapping the life blood of the country and undermining the confidence of the people in their government and in themselves. The Serbian military has demonstrated a commitment to professionalization and modernizing to NATO standards. The West must help to consolidate these reforms by encouraging Serbia to bid for NATO membership. Although the military has made much progress, the other internal security services have undergone a change in leadership and reorganization, but have yet to prove they are effective and truly reformed. On the corruption and criminal front, the Serbian government has yet to set up an effective organized crime and corruption fighting commission or strategy. Now is the time for the US and EU to act to provide advice and aid to help develop reforms. Most important is to progressively reward progress with economic integration and to leave the door open for EU and NATO membership should Serbia demonstrate that it has taken to heart the values forming the foundations of the West.

Attachment 1



Notes

¹ Unless otherwise noted, the term “Serbian” will be used to refer to multi ethnic nation of Serbia, and not to the Serb ethnic group which is the majority in Serbia, not including Kosovo.

² Frank Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe, Rules and Rhetoric*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 4)

³ Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria are EU and NATO members. Croatia and Albania received an invitation to join NATO 6 April 2008. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has a NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP). Bosnia Herzegovina and Montenegro have expressed interest in receiving a MAP. Croatia and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are EU candidate countries. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia including Kosovo are potential candidates. See European Commission website:

http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/index_en.htm

⁴ “The Western Balkans, A Stuck Region,” *The Economist*, 12 Feb 2009

⁵ “While having formally declared its independence, Kosovo is still technically a UN administered territory. However, responsibility for administering the province is in transition between the UN Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) and a new European Union led mission (EULEX) which will oversee the 'supervised independence' put forward in the Ahtisaari proposals. This transition phase was due to be completed in June 2008, but it is unclear when a full handover will take place, as resolution 1244, which provides the mandate for UNMIK's presence, remains in force.” Source: “Executive summary, Kosovo.” *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - The Balkans*, Janes 2008, Date Posted: 24 Jun 2008, accessed 19 March 2008 at http://sentinel.janes.com/subscribe/sentinel/country_report_doc.jsp?Prod_Name=BALK&Sent_Country=Kosovo#toclink-j2831213023181573

⁶ “Executive summary, Kosovo.” *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - The Balkans*, Janes 2008, Date Posted: 24 Jun 2008, accessed 19 March 2008 at http://sentinel.janes.com/subscribe/sentinel/country_report_doc.jsp?Prod_Name=BALK&Sent_Country=Kosovo#toclink-j2831213023181573

⁷ From a high of 60,000 troops, peacekeeping forces in Bosnia have been reduced to less than 2,500 today. Source: Jim Dorschner, “Endgame in Bosnia,” *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 18 April 2007

⁸ “Executive summary, Bosnia-Herzegovina.” *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - The Balkans*, Janes 2008, Date Posted: 2 May 2008, accessed 19 March 2008 at http://sentinel.janes.com/subscribe/sentinel/country_report_doc.jsp?Prod_Name=BALK&Sent_Country=Bosnia-Herzegovina

⁹ Julie Kim, “Macedonia (FYROM): Post-Conflict Situation and U.S. Policy,” Congressional Research Service, (17 June 2005), 10

¹⁰ Dejan Anastasijevic, “Organized Crime in the Western Balkans,” *Trends in Organized Crime*, no. 4 (December 2008): 431

¹¹ “Murdered Croatia Journalist Pukanic Was Key Witness on Balkan Tobacco Mafia,” *Sofia News Agency*, 31 October 2008 (no author given http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=98425)

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- ¹² Bojan Pancevski, "War declared on mafia as car bomb kills journalist," *The Times (London)*, 24 October 2008, pg 43
- ¹³ Dejan Anastasijevic, "Organized Crime in the Western Balkans," *Trends in Organized Crime*, no. 4 (December 2008): 432
- ¹⁴ Wesley K. Clark, "Playing Games with Kosovo; Moscow sees Serbia as its final bulwark in the Balkans against the steady advance of the West," *Newsweek International Edition*, 3 March 2008
- ¹⁵ "The Russian Option; Serbia's Future," *The Economist*, 20 October 2007
- ¹⁶ Staff, "Bitterly Disputed German-Russian Gas Pipeline Heads for Estonia," *Deutsche Welle*, 13 April 2007
- ¹⁷ Gregory Feifer, "Serbia Plays Key Role In Russian Gas Pipeline Plans," *Morning Editions*, National Public Radio, 7 January 2009
- ¹⁸ Mark A Smith, *Russian Energy Interests in the Balkans*, (Shrivenham, England, Defense Academy of the United Kingdom, March 2008), 2-3
- ¹⁹ Robert Kagan, *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*, (New York, USA, Alfred A Knopf, Publisher, April 2008), 14-15
- ²⁰ "No Place Else to Go, Serbia's Future," *The Economist*, 26 January 2008
- ²¹ Emil Giatzidis, "The Challenge of Organized Crime in the Balkans and the Political and Economic Implications," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol 23 No 3 (September 2007), 345
- ²² Will Bartlett, "Economic Transition in Serbia Since 2000, Trends and Prospects," *Western Balkans Security Observer – English Editions*, issue: 7-8/2007-2008, pg 29-37
- ²³ European Stability Initiative, *The cost of non-Europe, Textile towns and the future of Serbia*, Belgrade, 18 January 2006, 3
- ²⁴ "Europa – Glossary – Stabilisation and Association Process," http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/stabilisation_association_process_en.htm, accessed 25 March 2009
- ²⁵ European Stability Initiative, *The cost of non-Europe, Textile towns and the future of Serbia*, Belgrade, 18 January 2006, 1 (European Stability Initiative)
- ²⁶ *ibid*, 1
- ²⁷ *ibid*, 1-2 Bulgaria signed a trade agreement with the EU in 1993 and joined the WTO in 1996, while Macedonia signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU in 2001 and joined the WTO in 2003.
- ²⁸ European Stability Initiative, *The cost of non-Europe, Textile towns and the future of Serbia*, Belgrade, 18 January 2006, 2
- ²⁹ "Netherlands Continues to Reject EU's SAA with Serbia Over War Crimes Issue," *Belgrade Tanjug in English – official state news agency*, 13 December 2008, Country Watch, www.countrywatch.com/cw_wire_stories.aspx?UID=3650973. The Dutch are very sensitive to this issue because their peacekeeping troops attempted to protect the Bosnian Moslem city of Srebrenica from Bosnian Serb forces led by Ratko Mladic in 1995. The lightly armed Dutch troops were taken hostage and then forced to withdraw, leaving the citizens of Srebrenica to be massacred. You can find a report and timeline at this BBC link: http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/july/11/newsid_4080000/4080690.stm
- ³⁰ "New Serbian Government to Annul EU Deal – Premier," *BBC Monitoring Europe- Political*, 29 April 2008, British Broadcasting Corp, 2008

³¹ Zoran Cirjakovic, "Serbia, EU sign Stabilization and Association Agreement," *Los Angeles Times*, 30 April 2008

³² "Blow West," *Economist.com*, 12 May 2008

³³ 2007. Source: "CIA World Fact Book," <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rb.html>

³⁴ "A New Strong Man for Serbia," *The Economist*, 18 Sep 2008

³⁵ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "The Alliance's New Strategic Concept" (1991) paragraph 20, updated 7 Feb 2005, accessed 1 Feb 2008 at <http://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c911107a.htm>

³⁶ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "1995 Study on Enlargement," <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/enl-9501.htm> accessed 4 April 2009, Ch 1.A.3

³⁷ Rachel A. Epstein, "NATO Enlargement and the Spread of Democracy: Evidence and Expectations," *Security Studies*, volume 14, issue 1 (October 2005) 63-105

³⁸ Frank Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe, Rules and Rhetoric*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 4

³⁹ *ibid*, 4

⁴⁰ *ibid*, 81-82

⁴¹ *The North Atlantic Treaty*, (Washington D.C., USA, 4 April 1949), <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/treaty.htm>

⁴² Frank Schimmelfennig, *The EU, NATO and the Integration of Europe, Rules and Rhetoric*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 81

⁴³ *Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community*, (Paris, France, 18 April 1951), 1

⁴⁴ Colin Flint, *War and Peace: from Deathcamps to Diplomats*, (Oxford UK, Oxford University Press, 2005), 398 - "Due to its geographic location within and across the historically volatile continent of Europe, NATO more obviously epitomizes Kant's 'zones of peace' argument than many other international institutions. Immanuel Kant argued that a universalist peace is attainable and that societies are inherently striving for such a peace...Kantian peace is based on three elements: democratization, codependence as established through economic interaction, and joint membership in international institutions. The first two Kantian principles are general prerequisites before a country joins NATO, whereas the third principle is manifest in NATO itself"

⁴⁵ "Europe's Family Squabbles; Charlemagne," *The Economist*, 28 February 2009

⁴⁶ "Extremist Nightmares; Charlemagne," *The Economist*, 5 March 2009.

⁴⁷ Ratko Femic, "Serbian defense minister speaks of differing views on government NATO entry," Serbian newspaper Danas, 7 July 2007, English transcript by BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 12 July 2007

⁴⁸ "Serbian parties disagree over possible NATO membership," *BBC Monitoring Europe – Political*, British Broadcasting Corp., 8 September 2007

⁴⁹ "Serbian president wants to open 'new chapter' in relations with USA," *BBC Monitoring Europe – Political*, British Broadcasting Corp., 11 March 2009

⁵⁰ Commission of the European Communities, *Serbia 2008 Progress Report*, SEC(2008) 2698 final, (Brussels, 05.11.2008) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/press_corner/key-documents/reports_nov_2008_en.htm, 11

⁵¹ Predrag Petrović, "An Attempted Debate – Mapping the Debate about NATO in Serbia's Civil Society," *Western Balkans Security Observer – English Edition*, Issue 5 (2007) 31-40

⁵² “Impact of NATO’s 1999 Campaign Against FRY Detailed,” *Belgrade Tanjug in English – official state news agency*, 13 December 2008, Country Watch, www.countrywatch.com/cw_searchdocument.aspx?DocNumParam=50

⁵³ “Serbia officially becomes member of NATO’s Partnership for Peace program,” Beta, Serbian new agency, 7 October 2007, from BBC Worldwide Monitoring

⁵⁴ Nano Ruzin, “Looking Forward to a Balkan Gig MAC,” NATO Review, Summer 2003, page 2, www.nato.int/docu/review/2003/issue2/english/special.html

⁵⁵ Charles Krupnick, *Almost NATO, Partners and Players in Central and Eastern European Security*, (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., Lanham, Maryland USA, 2003) 100-106

⁵⁶ Tereza Supova, “Slovak Daily Interviews Serbian President on Kosovo Status, EU Prospects,” *BBC Monitoring Europe – Political*, British Broadcasting Corp. 31 May 2007.

⁵⁷ The single biggest threat to parliamentary forces driving for Western integration has been the ultra-nationalist Serbian Radical Party that secured 78 seats (29% of vote). That party has since imploded leaving President Tadić’s Coalition for European Serbia firmly in control of Serbia for the near future. Ref: “A New Strong Man for Serbia,” *The Economist*, 18 Sep 2008

⁵⁸ Hungary will also be a good role model, but the large Hungarian minority in Vojvodina may complicate interactions.

⁵⁹ “Slovak development aid to focus on Serbia, Afghanistan, Kenya,” *BBC Monitoring Europe – Political*, British Broadcasting Corporation, 25 February, 2009

⁶⁰ Brian Beary, “EU/Serbia: Don’t Make EU Membership Hostage to Srebrenica, Say Ambassador,” *Europolitics*, 23 January 2009

⁶¹ Commission of the European Communities, *Serbia 2008 Progress Report*, SEC(2008) 2698 final, (Brussels, 05.11.2008) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/press_corner/key-documents/reports_nov_2008_en.htm

⁶² Commission of the European Communities, *Serbia 2008 Progress Report*, SEC(2008) 2698 final, (Brussels, 05.11.2008) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/press_corner/key-documents/reports_nov_2008_en.htm, 12-13, 50-52

⁶³ *ibid*, 431 (Dejan Anastasijevic)

⁶⁴ Commission of the European Communities, *Serbia 2008 Progress Report*, SEC(2008) 2698 final, (Brussels, 05.11.2008) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/press_corner/key-documents/reports_nov_2008_en.htm, 51-52

⁶⁵ Emil Giatzidis, “The Challenge of Organized Crime in the Balkans and the Political and Economic Implications,” *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol 23 No 3 (September 2007), 345

⁶⁶ Momcilo Grubac, *The Fight Against Organised Crime in Serbia, From the Existing Legislation to a Comprehensive Reform Proposal*, United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, (Turin, Italy, 2008), 39

⁶⁷ Roy Godson, “The Political-Criminal Nexus and Global Security,” *Menace to Society, Political-Criminal Collaboration around the World*, (New Brunswick, NJ, USA, Transaction Publishers 2003), 3-4

⁶⁸ Dejan Anastasijevic, “Organized Crime in the Western Balkans,” *Trends in Organized Crime*, no. 4 (December 2008): 432

⁶⁹ There were many security agencies under Milosevic which he played off against each other to maintain control. These boiled down to two main groups: KOS (Kontraobavestajna sluzba) a part of the Yugoslav National Army, the RDB (Resor drzavne bezbednosti) which was renamed BIA

in 2002 (Bezbednosono-informativna agencija) The KOS was organized on a national level along with the army under the former Yugoslavia and thus was not always Serbian centric. The RDB/BIA was organized on a republic rather than a federal level (Serbia, Croatia etc. versus Yugoslavia). It “never had quite the same kind of institutional autonomy as its military counterpart, functioning instead as an unambiguous instrument of regime control, surveillance and coercion.” For simplicity, I will refer to the RDB and BIA as the BIA throughout this paper. From: Timothy Edmunds, “Intelligence Agencies and Democratization:[sic] Continuity and Change in Serbia after Milosevic,” *Europe-Asia Studies* Vol. 60 No. 1 (January 2008), 30-33
⁷⁰ *ibid*, 432 (Dejan Anastasijevic).

⁷¹ Timothy Edmunds, “Intelligence Agencies and Democratization:[sic] Continuity and Change in Serbia after Milosevic,” *Europe-Asia Studies* Vol. 60 No. 1 (January 2008), 33-34

⁷² “Excerpts: UNICRI (2008) The fight against organized crime in Serbia: from the existing legislation to a comprehensive reform proposal. Turin: UNICRI,” *Trends in Organized Crime*, no. 4 (December 2008): 441 – This is a more readily accessible version of the original UNICRI report that I have also referenced in this paper. The original report is 286 pages long and contains suggested text for specific legislation to combat corruption in Serbia. It is available at the USAF Air University Library at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama.

⁷³ Timothy Edmunds, “Intelligence Agencies and Democratization:[sic] Continuity and Change in Serbia after Milosevic,” *Europe-Asia Studies* Vol. 60 No. 1 (January 2008), 38-39

⁷⁴ Edmunds, 38-40

⁷⁵ Edmunds, 45

⁷⁶ Edmunds, 43

⁷⁷ “Serbian court confirms sentences for Djindjic's killers,” *South Eastern European Times*, 29 December 2008. Nicholas Wood, “12 convicted in assassination of Serbian prime minister,” *International Herald Tribune*, 23 May 2007

⁷⁸ “Croatia, Serbia agree to cooperate in fight against organized crime,” *Zagreb HINA in English – independent press agency*, 12 December 2008, Country Watch, www.countrywatch.com/cw_wire_stories.aspx?UID=3646809

⁷⁹ Roy Godson, “The Political-Criminal Nexus and Global Security,” *Menace to Society, Political-Criminal Collaboration around the World*, (New Brunswick, NJ, USA, Transaction Publishers 2003), 18

⁸⁰ In 2008, Hong Kong had a Corruption Perception Index score of 8.1 on a 10 point scale, beating the US score of 7.3. The index is compiled annually by Transparency International, http://transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi

⁸¹ *ibid*, 246-250

⁸² *ibid*, 19

⁸³ Though there was some tainting by dirty money, the recent elections were rated free and fair by independent observers. Commission of the European Communities, *Serbia 2008 Progress Report*, SEC(2008) 2698 final, (Brussels, 05.11.2008) http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/press_corner/key-documents/reports_nov_2008_en.htm, 7

⁸⁴ “Netherlands Continues to Reject EU’s SAA with Serbia Over War Crimes Issue,” *Belgrade Tanjug in English – official state news agency*, 13 December 2008, Country Watch,

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